INTRODUCTION

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Humanity has always felt the need for mediators between the everyday world and the transcendent world of divinity. Certain men and women, both while living and (perhaps especially) when dead, have been seen as having special qualifications to serve as mediators between the two worlds. It is through them that worship is often directed. Since saints are also products of their own societies, they appear in many forms, belonging to and reflecting the societies from which they come, displaying different attitudes and relationships. But the power and consequently the popularity of a saint may vary depending on changing social conditions. Moreover, from time to time and for a number of reasons, strong opposition to the saints and the concept of sainthood has arisen. In short, saints have histories, often complex and many-sided. This volume is concerned with the manifestations of Islamic sainthood, which have taken form in the religious practices and political structures of Muslim societies from medieval times to the present.

Sainthood in itself is a subject that resists analysis, since according to many accounts it is the result of the self-effacement of the individual in the divine qualities. For us it is easier to approach the subject through its effects, miraculous or ordinary, which are primarily recorded in ritual, song, narrative, and history. Nonetheless, sainthood, as Michel Chodkiewicz has observed, "remains masked by its manifestations and its signs."[1] Although the intimate experiences of sainthood may be beyond our access, the general concept of humans who are close to God has had an extraordinary role in the history of Islam. The purpose of this collection of essays is to elucidate some of the ways in which saints have influenced the religious and social life of Islam.

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[1] Michel Chodkiewicz, *Le Sceau des saints: Prophétie et sainteté dans la doctrine d'Ibn Arabî* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), p. 55.

SAINTS IN ISLAM: SUFISM AND SHI'ISM

The concept of sainthood in Islamic history may be considered one of the fundamental religious categories that has guided the development and structure of Islamic society. Some brief and general remarks about the nature of Islamic sainthood are, therefore, in order.

What is a saint in the context of Islam? To examine the concept of sainthood in Islam one may begin with a well-known passage from the Qur'an: "The friends of God (*awliyā' allāh*) have no fear, neither do they sorrow" (10.62). The Arabic term *walī* (plural *awliyā'*) commonly means a friend, a client, or one who is protected by a kin-relationship.[2] It is a name applied to God in the Qur'an, where he is referred to as "the Friend of the faithful" (3.68), and frequently the Muslim is called upon to realize that God is the only real Friend and Helper. Thus those who may be regarded as the friends of God would be people with a very special status. To apply the term "saint" to the Islamic wali raises the question of how legitimate it is to use a term of Christian origin in a Muslim context. Theoretical terminology must necessarily be taken from words in common usage, which are then defined with respect to the class of phenomena that need to be discussed. With proper qualification, the term "saint" can serve as such a technical term. Some may object that Islam has no equivalent of the Catholic process of canonization, a quasi-legal procedure that only leads to the identification of a saint after many specific criteria are held to be fulfilled. Since canonization can only be performed post mortem, the saints are defined in Christian terms as the souls of the blessed dead that are in heaven. In Islam, while there is a comparable focus on the saintly dead, we are here also faced with "saints" who are very much alive, who deal directly with the problems of social and political life. Peter Brown has described several important characteristics of saints in Latin Christianity, much of which can also be seen, mutatis mutandis, in Islam. According to Brown, saints enjoy the special protection of God, they replace angels as the intermediaries between God and humanity, and their relationship with God reduplicates the patronage network of society, raising the possibility of their intervention with God to obtain favor for the believer.[3] From the viewpoint of the history of religion, all these features are found in the position of Muslim *awliya'*. So, leaving aside the juridical aspect of canonization, the term "saint" can be usefully applied to holy persons in Islam.[4]

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[2]For the juridical and political meanings of *wali*, see Hermann Landolt, "Walāyah," *Encyclopedia of Religion* 15:316-319.

[3]Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 56-64.

[4]For recent comparative studies of sainthood, see John Stratton Hawley, ed., *Saints and Virtues, Comparative Studies in Religion and Society*, no. 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Richard Kieckhefer and George D. Bond, ed., *Sainthood: Its Manifestations in World Religions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

The two principal areas of Islamic thought in which sainthood has been elaborated are Sufism, or Islamic mysticism, and Shi'ism. The Sufi movement, which coalesced in the ninth century C.E., was a mystical trend based on intensive interiorization of Islamic ritual and personal devotion to God and the Prophet. Sufism seems to have originated first in Iraq and then became established in northern Iran, especially Khurasan.[5] By the tenth century, Sufism was a well-established movement with a large literature. The handbooks and biographical treatises produced at this time linked Sufism with noted ascetics from the earliest periods of Islam, so that the public presentation of Sufism emphasized that it was a rigorous form of practical discipline and knowledge comparable to the principle Islamic religious sciences.

Classical Sufi writers insisted that sainthood (*walāya*) was the essential principle of Sufism.[6] The handbook of Abu al-Qasim al-Qushayri (d. 1072) gives us a fairly typical summation of the Sufi doctrine of sainthood.[7] Al-Qushayri defined the wali in two ways: first, in a passive sense, as one of the pious for whom God takes responsibility (*wa huwa yatawallā al-ṣāliḥīn,* Qur. 7.196); secondly, in an intensification of the active meaning, as one who takes responsibility for devotion to God and obedience to him, whose devotion to him is uninterrupted (*'alā al-tawālī*). Both of these descriptions are appropriate, in al-Qushayri's view. These definitions of sainthood stress a mutual and close relationship between God and the human soul, expressed on the divine side by protection and responsibility and on the human side by worship and obedience.

From this fundamental relationship of intimacy, al-Qushayri derives other conclusions regarding the experiences and impact of the saints in Sufism. He goes on to say that, just as the prophet is immaculate (*ma'ṣūm*), so the saint is protected from sin (*maḥfūz*). Various early authorities are quoted on the nature of Sufi sainthood. Bistami (d. 875) spoke of saints as the brides of God, known to no other. Saints may not be aware of their own status, and most people will be unable to recognize one. Abu 'Ali al-Juzjani (d. ca. 964) described the saint by using the language of mystical annihilation (*fanā'*) of the ego and subsistence (*baqā'*) in God, saying, "The saint is the one who is annihilated in his state, but subsisting in the witnessing of the Real; God takes responsibility for his governing, and the lights of authority (*tawwāla*) come upon him continually (*tawālat*). He has no information about himself, nor reliance on any other than God." This mystical experience could nonetheless have a subtle and beneficial

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1987); Richard Kieckhefer and George D. Bond, ed., *Sainthood: Its Manifestations in World Religions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

[5]Jacqueline Chabbi, "Remarques sur le développement historique des mouvements ascétiques et mystiques au Khurasan, III[e]/IX[e] siècle-IV[e]/X[e] siècle," *Studia Islamica* 46 (1977), pp. 5-72.

[6]Landolt, "Walāyah," 15:321-322.

[7]Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī, al-Risāla *al-Qushayriyya,* ed. 'Abd al-Ḥalim Maḥmūd and Maḥmūd *ibn* al-Sharīf, 2 vols. continuously paginated (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥaditha, 1972-74), II, 520-525.

effect on others. Yahya ibn Mu'adh (d. 872) said, "The saint is the perfume of God on earth. The sincere ones scent him, and his fragrance reaches their hearts, so that by it they are roused to longing for their lord, and they increase in devotion according to the diversity of their character."

Traditions going back to ḥadīth reports from Muhammad affirm that there is a special class of servants of God, usually numbered as 356, upon whom the maintenance of the world rests, though they remain unknown to the world. These include the "substitutes (*abdāl*)," the "rescuer (*ghawth*)," and the supreme figure of the hierarchy, the "axis" of the world (*quṭb*). Although the most comprehensive formulation of this hierarchy was given by Ibn `Arabi, the basic idea is archaic. The spiritual hierarchy was an invisible parallel to the external political order. After the death of 'Ali, the Islamic empire lost its spiritual substance and fell into the hands of a worldly dynasty. The saints came to be regarded by many as the real rulers of the world.

Nonetheless, there was a certain reticence among Sufi authors when it came to clarifying the nature of sainthood. This reticence was especially evident with respect to the relation of sainthood to the overarching authority of the Prophet Muhammad. Most Sufi spokesmen came down clearly in affirmation of the supreme position of the prophets over that of the saints. Typical of this opinion was Sulami (d. 1021), who said, "The end of the saints is the beginning of the prophets"; this clearly placed the Sufi saint beneath the prophet, for whom the saint was a devoted follower.[8] The same understanding is articulated by other early Sufis such as al-Sarraj (d. 988).[9] This distinction between prophetic and saintly authority was also articulated as theological doctrine. The early Hanafi creed known as the Fiqh Akbar II (which Wensinck dated to the early tenth century) recognized but distinguished between the wonders (*mu'jizāt*) of the Prophets and the miracles (*karāmāt*) of the saints.[10] Apart from this dogmatic construction, however, there was always a certain tension between the fixed traditional position of the prophet and the ongoing divine inspiration that was always available in sainthood.[11] As a parallel to the final authority of Muhammad as "seal of the prophets" arose the tantalizing phenomenon of the "seal of the saints," a status first outlined by al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi (ninth century) and claimed in a special sense by Ibn al-'Arabi (d. 1240).[12]

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[8]al-Qushayri, II, 522.

[9]Abú Naṣr 'Abdallah b. 'Alí al-Sarráj al-Túsí, *The Kitáb al-Luma' fi 'l-Taṣawwuf*, ed. Reynold Alleyne Nicholson (Luzac & Company Ltd., 1963), p. 318.

[10]A. J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development* (Cambridge, 1932; reprint ed., New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1979), pp. 193, 224.

[11]Yohannan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Aḥmadī Religious Thought and Its Medieval Background* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), part II.

[12]See Chodkiewicz (above, n. 1), esp. pp. 41-64, for a judicious discussion of sainthood in classical Sufi authors.

If it was difficult to clarify the relationship between the Sufi saint and the prophet, the situation was even more complicated with regard to the imams of Shi'ism, since the term wali was used in both Sufism and Shi'ism. Scholars such as Henry Corbin have described the difference between these two tendencies of Islamic thought in terms of two verbal nouns derived from *walī*. Sufism emphasized *wilāya*, which can be translated as sainthood as described above. In Shi'ism the preferred term is *walāya*, which refers to the initiatic authority of the imams. More recent research indicates that the distinction between these two vocalizations cannot be so neatly turned into doctrinal hypostases.[13] In any case, in Shi'ism the term *walī* was applied first to 'Ali, the son-in-law and cousin of Muhammad, in the sense of being the spiritual and temporal successor to the Prophet. Just as the Prophet transmitted his guidance to 'Ali through initiation, so through 'Ali and Fatima his descendants, the imams, continue to possess this initiatic authority for all their followers; this is even the case in Iranian (Twelver) Shi'ism, for although the number of imams is restricted to twelve, the twelfth imam is still the living (if concealed) spiritual authority. The relationship between the ordinary believer and the imam was construed by analogy with 'Ali's relationship with the Prophet Muhammad. Just as 'Ali was a close relation or client (*mawlā*) of Muhammad, so the believer is a relative or client of the imam. Walaya as adherence to the imams became the fundamental premise of Shi'ism, without which salvation was impossible.[14]

In reality the Sufi and Shi'i concepts of sainthood overlapped considerably in significance; thus initiatic authority played an important role in Sufism, and the terminology of mystical experience could also be found in Shi'ism.[15] In several groups discussed in this volume (Bektashi, Ahl-i Haqq, and Alevi), Sufism and Shi'ism are both profoundly involved in the operating notions of sainthood. Although the term wali may have been used first in Shi'ism, it has a much wider application in Sufism, due to the large number of Sufi saints who have received this title down to the present day.

Sainthood has never been free from controversy. Although plenty of Islamic jurists have recognized the legitimacy of sainthood, there have also been severe criticisms leveled at individual saints (e.g., al-Hallaj, Ibn al-'Arabi). Critics such as Ibn al-Jawzi and Ibn Taymiyya had harsh words for Sufis whom

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[13]Chodkiewicz, pp. 34-35, shows that *walāya* is the preferred term for sainthood as a state, both in the Qur'ān and in much of early Sufi thought. He suggests that the popularity of the vocalization *wilāya* may reflect its grammatical form, which is that of the exercise of an office; to the public, this aspect of sainthood would be of greater interest than the state of sainthood in itself.

[14]Landolt, "Walāyah," 15:319-321.

[15]Cf. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Shi'ism and Sufism," in his *Sufi Essays* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1973), pp. 104-120, esp. p. 108; Kāmil Muṣṭafā al-Shaybi, *al-Ṣila bayna al-taṣawwuf wa al-tashayyu'* (Egypt: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1969), pp. 347 ff.

they judged to have transgressed the religious law, although both scholars were also devout students of moderate Sufism. In recent times, however, Sufism and sainthood have formed the object of intense attacks by both Islamic modernists and fundamentalists, for different reasons. Modernists reject saints as relics of medieval superstition and obstacles to the realization of a rational modern form of Islam. Fundamentalists (both Sunni and Shi'i), who are intent on the Islamization of society, reject saints as heretical innovators and as distractions from ideological activism. In the West, it is perhaps not sufficiently appreciated that those who claim to represent "true" Islam, especially the vocal fundamentalists, form in fact a small minority of Muslims. In most Islamic countries, the average person still finds it natural to approach God not only through ritual prayers and religious duties but also through the more personalized mediation of the saints.

Sainthood, then, was based on a name shared between God the Friend and the friends of God. The ordinary person could not command direct access to this relationship of intimacy. Only insofar as the divine grace made it available could outsiders share in the fruits of sainthood. The examples chosen by the contributors to this volume illustrate the manifestations of Islamic sainthood in two main areas: the veneration of saints in a variety of cultural and ritual situations, and the political roles of saints in different Islamic societies.

VENERATION OF SAINTS

How are saints regarded by Muslims? A simple example is provided in the following account of a pious Turkish family's practice of recognizing the saints:

> In our youth, when our family went to a new city or a new house, the elders of the house would first ask about the quarter's saint, and then the quarter's poor. That evening the family would assemble, and the most respected member of the family would read, with a lovely voice, the Qur'an for the sake of the saint. Later the necessary concern would be anonymously sent to the poor.[16]

Standard acts of piety such as Qur'an recitation and giving alms were here linked with the saint of the locality, in a process that connected the immediate here-and-now with the eternal. Veneration of the saints has taken many forms in Islamic countries, most notably in the tombs that act as centers for pilgrimage and in the musical rituals that open the soul to the spiritual powers of the saints.

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[16]Nezihe Araz, *Anadolu Evliyaları* (4th ed., Istanbul: Üçler Matbaası, 1975).

The saints fulfill many functions. They hold up the universe; ranks of saints assist the main saint, the Pole or Axis (*quṭb*), in supporting and preserving the world in its place. They assist people with their everyday problems, preventing and healing illness, making barren women fertile, bringing good fortune, and protecting and enlarging the crops. John Bowen's field work among the Gayo people of northern Sumatra enables him to describe the different Gayo categories of saints, and the way in which these saints transmit power onto the landscape and into the social structure of village communities. In this case, Islamic concepts of sainthood, not specifically related to Sufi orders or shrines, interact with local cosmology to form an intricate pattern of healing and agricultural rituals and relations within a descent-based society. Katherine Ewing uses a psychological analysis of dreams to show how modern, supposedly "Westernized" professionals in Pakistan seek fulfillment through the Sufi master. Her discussion of the redefinition of social roles through dream initiations indicates how vital the concept of sainthood remains even in a secular context.

The closeness of the saint to God is shown by demonstration of extraordinary power (*baraka*), which permits the performance of remarkable deeds (*karāmāt, manāqib*). This power can include many well-recognized abilities, including inspired guessing or mind-reading; healing the sick, and even reviving the dead; controlling the elements and animals, flying, and walking on water; and shape-changing and bilocation. Sufi theorists warned that miracles were temptations by which God tested the adept. In practice the *wali/veli* might or might not have an unimpeachable character or be concerned with the ethical side of actions; for some followers, it was more important that the saint perform miracles or near-miracles and be seen as the possessor of semi-divine powers.

Outstanding Islamic religious figures are often referred to as *sheikh* (or *pīr* in Persian, both terms meaning literally "elder"), especially if they are famous as teachers; although they may be revered as saints before or after death, the religious rituals of veneration are most typically directed towards the sacred dead (whether known as *wali* [Persian *valī*, Turkish *velī*] or by a roughly equivalent term such as *bābā*, etc.). The tomb of a saint may be any simple grave, but sometimes it develops into an elaborate tomb complex. Often an extensive cult grows up around the tomb of the saint. The symbolic importance of the tomb can be seen in the example of the Algerian Sufi leader Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Rahman described by Julia Clancy-Smith; he became known as "the man with two tombs," because Turkish authorities in Algiers and Sufis in the Jurjura both claimed that they possessed the saint's body. In practice, much might depend on who controlled access to the saint's tomb.

The saint is believed to be somehow present in the tomb-shrine, and so pilgrims come to visit and adore or even pray to the saint — although in theory one should only pray to God. Offering prayers on behalf of the saint is the

preferred technique, as it sets up the possibility of a patronage relationship between the pilgrim and the saint. This sort of pilgrimage ritual was even codified, as in the eighteenth-century Indo-Persian manual of the Chishti Sufis translated by Carl W. Ernst. Many people, especially from the ruling class, chose to be buried near "their" saint to take advantage of the blessings in the vicinity.[17] Offerings would typically be made to the saint in the form of a vow; if the saint grants the supplicant's wish, the supplicant will fulfill the other side of the bargain by presenting something for the saint's tomb or its attendants. On the anniversary of the death of the saint, followers may celebrate the saint's *'urs* ("wedding"), or return to God. The 'urs custom is attested in Anatolia and in South Asia as early as the thirteenth century. Even in Turkey, which has officially proclaimed itself to be a secular state and in 1925 banned all *tekkes* (Sufi monasteries), the 'urs of Mevlana Jelaluddin Rumi is celebrated every December at his tomb with official approval and has now become a popular tourist attraction.

Poetry played a strong role in the case of 'Umar ibn al-Farid (*ca.* 1181-1235), whom Th. Emil Homerin presents as a mystically-inclined poet who became identified as a saint after his death. Controversies arose over both his use of the feminine gender for God and the interpretation of his poetry in terms of the doctrine of "the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*)" associated with Ibn al-'Arabi, yet his tomb soon became a popular pilgrimage site. By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Ibn al-Farid's domed tomb and *zāwiya* (cloister) in the Cairo cemetery attracted thousands of people for readings of his poems. Contemporary witnesses to these scenes reveal that attendance at congregational affairs at the mausoleum of the poet could truly inspire great numbers of people and arouse in them profound spiritual states.

The saints are represented in the visual arts as well. Abbas Daneshvari examines the astrocosmological role of the dragon in the cult of the saints, explaining why the dragon appears on begging bowls, holy shrines, mosques, and tombs. Although the dragon generally stands for attachment to earthly pleasures, when used in conjunction with the saints, it can represent the Sufi values of detachment from the world and resignation to one's lot in life. When transferred to the saintly sphere, the dragon became the guardian of spiritual treasure and saintly detachment.

One of the most remarkable practices of Islamic mysticism is listening to music (*samā'*). Despite the legal controversies that have raged over the permissibility of such music in Islamic law, music remains one of the most powerful means to express a relationship with the saints. In the words of Rumi,

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[17] A recent case in point is the burial of the mother of President Özal of Turkey, near the tomb of a Naqshbandi saint in the Süleymaniye complex, in direct violation of Turkish secularist law.

Like ardent lovers, he discerned in the sound of the rebeck the image of God's call to man.
The lament of the clarion and the threat of the drum bear a faint resemblance to that universal trumpet.
That is why philosophers say that these melodies are derived from the turning of the spheres.
Hence sama' is the food of the lovers, for within it they find the image of the meeting with the Beloved.[18]

Four articles bring out the significance of music and song, which are often employed to enhance the ceremonies at a saint's tomb; when these articles were presented at the conference, some authors dramatically revealed their expertise by performing on musical instruments used in rituals devoted to the saints. Regula Burckhardt Qureshi discusses the spiritual and emotional impact of Chishti samā' songs upon the mystical experience. The music for this North Indian Sufi assembly is drawn from classical, folk, and even the popular music of the culture at large; it facilitates the attainment of a state of trance, which is of crucial significance for the participants in the ceremonies.

From Jean During we learn that sacred music serves to mediate between the saint and the faithful of the Ahl-i Haqq of Kurdistan. These Shi'i sectarians believe they can establish contact with the saints of old and that the Divine Essence manifests itself in the secret meetings (*jam'*) when "the hearts are in harmony, and when music induces ecstasy by means of appropriate melodies." The sama' (the Sufi ceremony, sometimes employing music and dance) is often attached to the cult of a particular saint whose intercession and *baraka* (spiritual power) the participants in the ritual seek. In the Ahl-i Haqq tradition, the sacred melodies must not be modified, for singing them in set form revives the state of saintly personalities who have left traces in the music and in the world. Songs play the primary expressive role in the Ahl-i Haqq jam', and their musical modes manifest the spiritual hierarchy which is so significant in the cult of the saints.

The spiritual hierarchy appears as an important musical theme in both Sufi and Shi'i contexts. Qureshi and During explain the progression of types of music or mode from the beginning to the end of a ceremony, constructing literally an "effective form" that explicates the spiritual hierarchy, although the senses of spiritual hierarchy are quite different in the two cultures they study. Sufis and Shi'is also share a common devotion to figures such as the Sufi martyr Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj (d. 922), whose death on the gallows is invoked by initiatic practices using the *dār-i Manṣūr* ("gallows of Mansur"). Another link with Hallaj is the *'ayn-i jam'*, a musical ritual common to Bektashis and Ahl-i

[18]Rūmī, *Masnavi*, IV, 731-738, 42-43, trans. William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Love* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), p. 325.

Haqq, which derives its name from a technical term used by Hallaj to indicate the highest mystical experience, "essential union."

Music (and dance, too) is also essential to the mystical repertoire of the Alevi movement, a Shi'i group in Turkey. Irene Markoff argues that this music was, until recently, drawn from the folk traditions of the area and was characterized by a richness of regional stylistic diversity, even though the musicians were constrained to choose their repertoire from set regional melody types. When Alevi musicians in the cities began to receive conservatory training, however, a remarkable popularization of the Alevi mystical repertoire took place, and entirely new musical compositions came into use.

Earle Waugh used many interviews to study the interaction of saint and singer in Egyptian Sufi ceremonies, or *dhikr*. Waugh explains that the song of the singer (*munshid*) is considered to convey the knowledge of the sheikhs, with whom he must have an especially close relationship. In fact, the singer is thought of as if he were a relative of the sheikh, as well as of the friends of God, the saints. The singer works for a long time, often many years, with the saint and pleads to him for help in singing well enough to help his audience, the participants in the dhikr.

In each of these four contrasting contexts, there are two common musical factors. One is that performance of the music requires specialists. The Ahl-i Haqq rely on adepts expert in knowing, interpreting and transmitting the music, and also on a chorus of singers. Among the Alevis, the musicians are accorded the status of one of the twelve assistants who are named in the ceremonies according to their particular ritual service function. In North India the situation of the musicians is entirely different: they are service professionals, attached to every established sheikh, but entirely outside the spiritual hierarchy. The munshidin of Cairo likewise serve at the pleasure of their sheikhs and strive to transmit the teachings of their order, through songs that may even be communicated by deceased saints. The other factor common to these four traditions is the use of musical instruments to accompany song. For the Ahl-i Haqq and the Alevis in particular, the religious symbolism attached to the musical instruments reflects the groups' complex symbolic system.

Veneration of the saints, then, includes a multitude of symbolic acts of recognition of the mediating power that the saints possess. Whether in healing rituals in Sumatra, dreams in Pakistan, pictures of dragons, tombs across the Islamic world, or the songs that praise the saints, the same recognition of saintly power has led to formal acknowledgement of the impact of the saints on Islamic religious life.

SAINTS AND THE POLITICAL ORDER

The impact of saints on the political order has been noticed by many observers. The North African historian Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406) remarked that nomadic groups, though ordinarily fractious and undisciplined, can be extraordinarily powerful when mobilized behind the authority of a saint.[19] In addition, most Sufi saints, but not all, have been associated with the brotherhoods or orders that began to proliferate in Islamic countries around the twelfth century. These orders assumed a considerable social and political importance as Sufis, along with the scholars of Islamic religious sciences (the *'ulamā'*), formed the twin supports of the new political order that emerged from the wreckage of the caliphate. This overt social extension of Sufism contrasted with the relatively private and less structured character of Sufism in its earlier phase. As Marshall Hodgson observed regarding the growth of medieval Sufi orders, "a tradition of intensive interiorization re-exteriorized its results and was finally able to provide an important basis for social order."[20] Social scientists and historians have only begun to appraise the enormous amount of material relating to the social and political role of the Sufi orders and the saints.[21] Abstract typologies of the historical phases of the Sufi orders, such as the three-stage model of J. S. Trimingham, or John Voll's analysis of "Neo-Sufism," have provided heuristic categories for investigation.[22] In practice, however, such typologies inevitably need to be modified according to the dictates of each particular situation. The researches in this volume make important gains in understanding the political aspects of Islamic sainthood in two historical domains out of the many that could have been chosen: the Ottoman empire, typifying the late medieval period of the "gunpowder empires," and the nineteenth- and twentieth-century encounter between Islamic countries and European colonialism.

In the study of the Ottoman empire, Anatolia and Rumelia stand out because of their relatively late Islamization, which took place in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries in Anatolia, and from the fourteenth century onward in Rumelia. Due to this circumstance, it is not surprising that many of the early saints were seen as missionaries. Their task was a double one: on the one hand, there were local Christian populations to be contended with. On the other hand,

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[19]Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History,* trans. Franz Rosenthal, ed. N. J. Dawood (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967; reprint ed., 1989), p. 120.

[20]Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization,* vol. II, *The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 218.

[21]For a recent collective survey, see *Les Ordres mystiques dans l'Islam: Cheminements et situation actuelle,* ed. A. Popovic and G. Veinstein (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1985).

[22]J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); John Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982).

many of the nomadic tribes entering Anatolia during the Seljuk period were but superficially Islamized and could only gradually be persuaded to give up certain of their shamanistic practices. Moreover some of the Mongol tribes entering Anatolia during the period of Mongol overlordship from the mid-thirteenth to the mid-fourteenth century were still fully pagan and demanded yet different strategies of the missionary attempting to convince them of the superiority of the Muslim faith. In the collections of mostly fifteenth-century legends which reflect the viewpoint of the successors to these early missionaries, the different strategies developed under these circumstances have been recounted in some detail.[23]

From the text of the *Vilâyet-nâme* ("The Book of Holiness") which contains legends associated with the popular thirteenth-century dervish saint Hacı Bektaş, we can deduce that the principal strategy attributed to this saint was to convince his prospective flock of his superior power. Thus Hacı Bektaş of Sulucakaraöyuk near Kırşehir rides a stone wall and makes it move, to oppose a rival saint, Mahmud Hayran of nearby Akşehir who rides a lion.[24] Or else Hacı Bektaş sends a dragon that devours the unbelievers, who after several attempts to convert them, still persist in their unbelief.[25] Occasionally this power may be used to reward people who show mercy toward the saint; thus Hacı Bektaş blesses a Christian woman from a Cappadocian village who shares her bread with him although she herself is very poor. In this case, it is not even necessary for the woman and her fellow villagers to convert; showing devotion to the saint is considered quite enough reason to take part in his blessings.[26] But for the most part, these early saints are portrayed as emphasizing the primary importance of fear as a path leading to God. As Halil İnalcık's study of the fifteenth-century saint Otman Baba demonstrates, this patron saint of the heterodox nomads that had recently immigrated into Rumelia was also a fearsome saint. Thus the saint

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[23]Scholars differ regarding the role of saints as missionaries for Islam, and indeed on the role of religion in state formation. Rudi Lindner has made the point that the ghâzî image of the early Ottomans as holy warriors for Islam, which Wittek took literally, was created retrospectively by official historians, the ulema who worked in the bureaucracy. Cf. Rudi Paul Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia*, Indiana University Uralic and Altaic Series, vol. 144 (Bloomington, IN: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1983), pp. 1-9, 34-36. Using a Protestant model of missions, Thomas Arnold accepted the picture of Sufis as peaceful missionaries in order to counteract the inaccurate image of Islam being spread by the sword; see T. W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam: A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith* (London, 1896; 3rd ed., London, 1930; reprint ed., Lahore: Shirkat-i-Qualam, n.d.). In any case, it may be observed that stories about conversion say as much about the people who are telling the story as about those who are its subjects. Cf. the methodologically astute observations of P. Hardy, "Modern European and Muslim Explanations of Conversion to Islam in South Asia: A Preliminary Survey of the Literature," in *Conversion to Islam*, ed. Nehemia Levtzion (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1979), pp. 68-99.

[24]*Manakıb-i Hacı Bektâş-i Velî. Vilâyet-nâme*, ed. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı (Istanbul, 1958), p. 49.

[25]*Vilâyet-nâme*, p. 13.

[26]*Vilâyet-nâme*, p. 23.

of Anatolia and Rumelia stands before his flock as endowed with mysterious powers, which remain all the more fear-inspiring as the connection of the powers of the saint with the realm of God and the Prophet is rarely made very clear to the reader of his legend.

At the same time it seems that the dervish saint, to be fully convincing, must occasionally exercise his powers against the secular rulers of the time. In this context, the *Vilâyet-nâme* of Hacı Bektaş is again very instructive:[27] The Governor, Nureddin Hoca (whose figure probably combines reminiscences of the munificent Mongol governor of Kırşehir, Nureddin Caca, with the title of a religious teacher and representative of Islamic law [*hoca*]), implicitly reproaches Hacı Bektaş for his lack of concern with the outward forms of Islamic worship, and possibly conventional morality as well.[28] When the pious hoca suggests a common prayer, and thereby presumably attempts to test the orthodox views of the saint, the water for the ablution is turned to blood. This is probably more than a simple device for making the ablution illegal in the sight of both Nureddin Hoca and Hacı Bektaş; the blood also alludes to the inherently violent and oppressive character of all political domination. As a second step, Hacı Bektaş responds to Nureddin's challenge with a complicated prophecy: Nureddin Hoca will be deposed, thrown in prison, saved from blindness only by a remedy indicated to him by the saint, and ultimately die far from his native land, which the legend assumes to be Kırşehir. Of course the prophecy comes true; what is important in our context, is that the saint can predict and therefore possibly even cause the fall from power of what must have been the politically dominating figure in the region. At the same time, Nureddin Caca-Hoca is saved from the ultimate misfortune of blindness by the intervention of the saint, who thereby makes it possible for the governor to continue his political career in another region.

This solution would indicate that the author(s) of the *Vilâyet-nâme* had to contend with two basic ambiguities. On the one hand political authority is both violent and unjust and yet is unavoidable; therefore the saint must humble the carriers of political authority but ensure their continued functioning. On the other hand, orthodox religious practice is tinged with violence in such a way that even those acts which are usually complacently accepted as meritorious, and even required, become illegitimate. But the author(s) of the *Vilâyet-nâme* probably found it impossible to even imagine a world in which the political involvement of representatives of orthodox religion did not exist, and the final remark in this episode, namely that the body of Nureddin Caca-Hoca was brought back to be

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[27] *Vilâyet-nâme*, pp. 28-31.

[28] On the historical Nureddin Caca, a Mongol governor of the Kırşehir region compare Ahmet Temir, *Kırşehir Emiri Cacaoğlu Nur al-din'in 1272 Tarihli Arapça Moğolca Vakfiyesi*, Türk Tarihi Kurum Yayınlarından VII, 34 (Ankara, 1959), pp. 8-13, 297-301.

buried in his native Kırşehir, quite possibly bears witness to this ultimate acceptance.

According to Halil İnalcık's study of the legend of Otman Baba, the saint rises to the double challenge posed by Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (ruled 1444-46 and 1451-81) and the religious establishment. When Otman Baba successfully predicts the failure of the sultan's Belgrade campaign, the sultan recognizes the saint as the veritable ruler and himself as the latter's humble and filial servant. On the other hand, the ulema of Istanbul are Otman Baba's unrelenting enemies, who after several unsuccessful attempts to have him and his dervishes executed, finally force the Baba to leave the city. Otman Baba may claim to have convinced the ruler of his mission, but in the case of the religious establishment, Otman Baba's defeat is obvious. The ambiguities of religion and political power remain unresolved.

Ahmet Yaşar Ocak shows that the Kalenderi dervishes confronted problems similar to those of Otman Baba. It would seem that Mehmed the Conqueror also attempted to settle these potential rebels in his new capital, where they were accorded a recognized place in the life of the city but could at the same time be kept under supervision. To the ambiguity of heterodox dervishes vis-à-vis the secular ruler there is a corresponding ambiguity of Sultan Mehmed toward the dervishes. From this point of view as from many others, Mehmed II occupies an intermediate position. On the one hand, the founder of the "classical" Ottoman political system did away with many of the methods of rule that had been employed by his predecessors. But at the same time he continued the wary, but not totally negative, attitude of most early Ottoman rulers with respect to the many heterodox dervishes active in Anatolia and Rumelia.

The Ottoman-Safavid wars of the sixteenth century were to change all this, and the heyday of Anatolian sainthood was followed by an age of usually anonymous martyrs. After the Ottoman persecution of heretic Kızılbaş dervishes was gradually toned down from the 1590's onward, most survivors found a haven in the expanded and consolidated Bektashi order of dervishes.[29] Suraiya Faroqhi's study shows that in the seventeenth century, Sufi centers (*zaviyes*) were socially active but politically and religiously quiescent in both the Anatolian and the Rumelian countryside. Yet under the surface of undramatic and routine functioning, the zaviyes continued to play a significant part in local politics. As a channel through which the grievances of ordinary subjects could be passed on to the central administration, the zaviyes remained important.

The stakes in the competition between saintly and political power changed drastically with the advent of European colonialism in Islamic lands. The

[29]Fuat Köprülü, *Türk Halk Edebiyatı Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul, 1935), article "Abdal," p. 33.

decapitation of existing monarchies often left only the independent Sufi brotherhoods intact as socio-political structures. Thus it is not surprising that Sufi saints and their followers often led anti-colonial resistance. Even the orders that did not take an activist stance against European powers were perceived as potential threats to be neutralized by inducement or intimidation. Three historical studies deal with Sufi brotherhoods in terms of their tribal connections and their colonial contexts, focusing on Algeria and Somalia in the nineteenth century and Afghanistan in the twentieth.

Julia Clancy-Smith explores the life and legacy of the founder of the Rahmaniyya brotherhood, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Rahman al-Gushtuli or Qushtuli (*c.* 1715-1800), a Berber saint who was educated in Cairo. Known for his intellectual gifts and his reforming ideas, Sidi 'Abd al-Rahman may well have been sent back to his native region to combat what Clancy-Smith has called the "well-publicized irreligion of the [Turkish] deylical regime" at Algiers. An attempt to resolve the tension between the regime and the saint occurred after the saint's death, when the reigning Dey, Hasan, sent a number of Rahmani adherents to bring Sidi 'Abd al-Rahman's body to Algiers to be buried there, as he had planned to be interred himself alongside Sidi 'Abd al-Rahman. In some hardly comprehensible way, the dead sheikh acquired a second corpse of himself, which was revealed as the "true body" some time after the raid on the Jurjura zawiya by the body snatchers from Algiers. After this miraculous episode, the fame of Sidi 'Abd al-Rahman as "the man with two tombs" spread in popular circles as never before, and pilgrims who wished to acquire the baraka of the Sheikh by visiting his grave had a choice, being able to go either to Algiers or to the Jurjura zāwiya. Yet the rural background of his adherents and the Berber origin of the saint certainly enhanced and enlarged the importance of this order, making the French invaders of the era after 1830 see the Rahmaniyya, which Louis Rinn called a "true national church," as a group of their most ardent and bitter enemies. The brotherhood maintained its hostility to them without interruption over the greater part of the nineteenth century.

The paper by Bradford G. Martin focusses on a Qadiri mystic of Somalia, Sheikh Uways bin Muhammad al-Barawi, as an instance of rivalry between Sufi brotherhoods and tribes in a semi-colonial context. Uways's proselytizing for the Qadiri order went along quite successfully in Somalia, in Zanzibar, and in other parts of East Africa in the late eighteen-eighties and nineties. By the later nineties, however, Uways began to meet opposition from a new and radically different group of Somali Sufis. This was the Salihiyya order, named after Muhammad Salih al-Rashidi (d. 1919), who only organized his order in 1887. Its leader in Somalia was the energetic Muhammad 'Abd Allah Hasan, the (wrongly named) "Mad Mulla." The Somali Qadiriyya was linked with certain Somali tribal elements, and it espoused well-worn theological attitudes, such as prayer for the intercession of saints (*tawassul*) and visits to tombs (*ziyārat al-qubūr*).

Uways and his adherents made the error of openly opposing and ridiculing the Salihiyya, drawing attention to their apparent "Wahhabi" views, their doctrinal rigidity, and even the way in which they cut their hair. These exchanges soon degenerated into polemics and intergroup skirmishes, culminating with a Salihi raid in the spring of 1909, in which Uways was assassinated by members of the other ṭarīqa. Among other accusations made by the Salihiyya against Uways and the Qadiris was their alleged closeness or friendly relations with the Italian occupiers of that part of Somalia, but this allegation apparently has no truth to it. Here disputes about the very nature of saintly power, conducted along the lines of tribal alliances, were partly masked by charges of collaboration.

David Edwards' study, "The Political Lives of Afghan Saints," presents a convincing portrait of the role of a powerful Naqshbandi Sufi family in the politics of Afghanistan during the twentieth century, and illustrates how tribalism functions as the dominant mode for both politics and religion. The Kabul Hazrats, who initially came to prominence in Afghanistan as a result of their role in resisting the British, also helped frustrate the Westernizing reforms of King Amanullah in the 1920's. They subsequently played a decisive role in the government of successive kings of Afghanistan. With the valuable resource of personal interviews with leading members of the Kabul Hazrat lineage, Edwards charts the consolidation and decline of saintly authority in relation to the Afghan monarchy, and its surprising reconstitution after the Soviet invasion in the current resistance against the Marxist regime. The re-emergence of saintly power in the unusual garb of a modern political party is another testimony to the resilience of sainthood in modern times.

CONCLUSIONS

The development of sainthood in Islam must be traced in the Sufi tradition as well as in Shi'ism. Sufism began as an intensive interiorization of Islamic religious practice, and its practitioners mapped out extensive areas of the human psyche in its interaction with the divine; the concept of those who attain closeness to God and are protected by him emerged as the basis for the concept of sainthood. Initiatic authority as developed in Shi'ism also furnished a model for "the friends of God," as they were revered in Alevi, Ahl-i Haqq, and Kalenderi circles. The remarkable penetration of sainthood into many diverse Islamic societies is evident from the studies in this volume. In South and Southeast Asia, Iran, and in the Arab, African, and Turkish regions, saints have acted as the embodiments of Islamic religious tradition for each time and place. The special status of saints was marked by the elaboration of numerous ritual practices to honor "the very special dead," particularly with regard to saints' tombs and the music that is performed for the saints. And in the political arena, the extraordinary command that saints have exerted over their followers has led to

conflict with rival sources of authority, whether they be sultans, other Sufi orders, or invading foreign powers. The notion of human closeness to God that is implicit in the Islamic concept of sainthood has been one of the most powerful and all-embracing phenomena in the history of Islam. Yet the subject of sainthood is not exhausted by the study of its effects in medieval or modern society.[30] There is a constant dialectic between the internal and external aspects of sainthood. Sainthood remains masked by its manifestations.

It may be suggested that the common thread in these analyses of Islamic sainthood is the expression of power, with the saints as mediators of that power between God and humanity. Beyond this generality, each situation needs to be further analysed in terms of its historical context and the genre of its mode of expression. This is the case with the tombs of Gayo saints, the dragon images explicated by Persian poetry, the dream-appearances of Sufi sheikhs, and the temporal and physical localization of sainthood in pilgrimage to tombs. Music, in particular, affords a method of emotional directness for expressing and establishing contact with saintly power. The folk-based music of the Alevis and the Ahl-i Haqq, with all its Shi'i associations, necessarily contrasts with the musical traditions of the Indian Chishtis and the munshidin of Cairo, which are linked to specific sheikhs and Sufi orders. Yet the basic principle of making contact with saintly power remains the same. In the political realm, the expressions that we have of saintly power are mostly ex post facto narratives, which justify existing social orders or attack unjust orders through their own historiographies. The tensions between saintly power and the Ottoman imperium are reflected in the narratives concerning Otman Baba, rural zaviyes, and the Kalendaris. The even more complex tensions around the Algerian Rahmaniyya, the Somalian Qadiriyya, and the Afghan Naqshbandiyya are shown in the encounters of these Sufi orders with colonial powers and the swirling chaos of modern politics. These are only a few of the many portraits that could be drawn of the religious and political impact of the saints on Islamic life. The diversity of sources and approaches found in this volume is an indication of the extraordinary complexity of the subject of Islamic sainthood.

As it turned out in discussion of these articles at the conference, there was general agreement that we could not meaningfully use simplistic Western sociological concepts of "high" and "low" culture, despite their apparent congruence with the typical Sufi distinction between the existential "elite (*khāṣṣ*)" and the "common (*'āmm*)."[31] A gap separates modern theories of

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[30]For an objection to the exclusively political and "external" approach to the study of saints and zaviyes, compare Vincent Cornell, "The Logic of Analogy and the Role of the Sufi Shaykh in Post-Merinid Morocco," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 15 (1983), pp. 67-93.

[31]See Louis Massignon's tantalizing theory of a "real elite" as "improving corrupted social and political situations with their sense of compassion for the universal," in "The Notion of a 'Real Elite' in Sociology and in History," in *The History of Religions: Essays in Methodology*, ed.

sainthood from the phenomenon itself; our psychological, socio-political, anthropological, literary, and historical analyses do not necessarily coincide with the perspectives of the Sufis themselves, nor should this be surprising. Yet in recognizing the autonomy of modern scholarship, it is also essential that we pay careful attention to the ways in which representatives of the saintly tradition conceptualize their participation in it. The strength of this collection of papers lies precisely in their reliance on authoritative primary sources, whether found in texts, performances, or in first-person interviews. It is on the basis of this sort of direct encounter that we can best begin to understand the variety of manifestations of Islamic sainthood.

Mircea Eliade and Joseph M. Kitigawa (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959), pp. 108-114.

Part One
Veneration of the Saints